IN POLAND STEHT EIN HAUS

The story of a folksong in search of a home

The study of folksongs with respect to their form, their age, their sources and the areas in which they are sung can lead the student upon many pleasant highways and byways. The search for Pennsylvania German folksongs is an alluring task, in which investigators have perhaps been too prone to assign authenticity to folksongs that were only later importations on the part of German immigrants who came and settled here among the Pennsylvania Germans long after the large mass migrations of the eighteenth century. Often, however, such songs took on interesting variations and dialect colorations in their new home.

Perhaps the dearth of early Pennsylvania German folksongs can be explained by the fact that the first years of the early pioneers in their new-world home were filled with hard labor and many cares; then too the austere religious habits of large groups precluded the singing of secular songs, but for the little household ditties and lullabys.

A short time ago one of our devoted contributors to the ECK, Mr. Frank H. Oberholtzer, sent us a number of old folksongs, which he had learned from a long deceased friend, one Peter Mumbauer, a full half century ago. The same Peter Mumbauer, he related, had been born of Pennsylvania German parents in Bucks County, and had lived and died there. Among these songs was one entitled **Dinge-dinge-daa.** It runs as follows:

In Poland steht ein Haus,
In Poland steht ein Haus,
In Poland steht ein Dinge-dinge-daa,
Mit me Huppskittel aa—
In Poland steht ein Haus.

Wer wohnt dann in dem Haus?
Wer wohnt dann in dem Haus?
Wer wohnt dann in dem Ding-dinge-daa,
Mit me Huppskittel aa,
Wer wohnt dann in dem Haus?

Der Waert der wohnt im Haus?
Der Waert der wohnt im Haus?
Der Waert der wohnt im Dinge-dinge-daa,
Mit me Huppskittel aa,
Der Waert der wohnt im Haus?

Der Waert der hot en Kuh,
Der Waert der hot en Kuh,
Der Waert der hot en Dinge-dinge-daa,
Mit me Huppskittel aa,
Der Waert der hot en Kuh,

Der Waert der hot en Maad,
Der Waert der hot en Maad,
Der Waert der hot en Dinge-dinge-daa,
Mit me Huppskittel aa,
Der Waert der hot en Maad,

Die Maad die melkt die Kuh,
Die Maad die melkt die Kuh,
Sie melkt die schwar-brau Dinge-dinge-daa,
Mit me Huppskittel aa,
Die Maad die melkt die Kuh,

We have retained the dialect elements with the High German as the song was given to us. The ending is abrupt. What happened after the maid has milked the cow? Apparently it is one of the many reiterative songs which seem to invite the singer to continue ad libitum.

Dr. Donald H. Yoder, in his valuable study of the Pennsylvania German folklore in the Hegins and Mahantango Valleys (See the ECK for Oct. 4 to Nov. 22 inclusive) found several versions of a song which he calls "Es bolisch Kindli", one of which also begins with a "Polish" innkeeper, who lives in a "Bolisch Haus", has a "Bolische Maad" in his "Bolische Kich" and

Die Maad die hot en Kind
Die Maad die hot en bolisches Kind,
So heissen sie es bolisches Kind,
Die Maad die hot en Kind.

Through Prof. J. Raymond Hepler Dr. Yoder became acquainted with another version beginning with the stanza "Die Maad iss in de Kich." These versions are obviously related to the one coming to us from Bucks County through Mr. Oberholtzer. But the song was also known in Lebanon County, for Dr. S. P. Heilman, in his long poem **"The Old Cider Mill** (Lebanon County Historical Society Proceedings, Vol. I, 1899) mentions "In Boland schteht ein Haus" as a song sung in Lebanon County years ago. We know nothing further of this version.

This song is not found among the Pennsylvania German folksongs contained in John Baer Stoudt's book on Pennsylvania German Folklore. Curiously enough it is not found in that vast treasury of German folksongs, the **Liederhort** of Erk and Boehme. But Dr. Yoder found a similar version under the title "In Holland steht ein Haus" sung in Hesse-Kassel as recorded in Johann Lewalter, **Deutsches Kinderlied und Kinderspiel in Kassel aus Kindermund in Wort und Weise gesammelt,** ed. Dr. Georg Schlaeger (Kassel: Verlag von Karl Vietor, 1911.) The reader will have no difficulty in sensing the similarity in the first stanza:

In Holland steht ein Haus,
In Holland steht ein Haus,
In Holland steht 'ne Vil-la-la,
Weisse, weisse Vil-la-la,
In Holland steht ein Haus,

and the first lines of the following stanzas:

Wer wohnt denn in dem Haus?
Da wohnt ein alter Mann.
Der Mann nahm sich 'ne Frau.
Die Frau nahm sich ein Kind.
Das Kind nahm sich 'ne Puppe.
Die Puppe schied vom Kind.
Das Kind schied von der Frau.
Die Frau schied von dem Mann.
Der Mann schied von dem Haus.
Dar Haus, das steht allein.

Dr. Yoder points out that the tune of the above song is the same as that of "The Farmer in the Dell." According to Lewalter the children singing the song form a circle, and when "house" is mentioned one child enters the circle; when "man" is mentioned, another; and so on, one after the other. They then again leave the circle one after another until "The house stands alone."

Of a similar nature, and with the same play is "Der Bauer faehrt ins Holz", also given in Lewalter's work and still another, bearing more evident family resemblance, runs as follows, in the first two stanzas:

Da oben auf dem,Berg,
Da oben auf dem Berg,
Da oben auf dem pohlischen Berg,
Juch-heissa vivat pohlischen Berg,
Da oben auf dem Berg,

Da steht ein altes Haus,
Da steht ein altes Haus,
Da steht ein altes pohlisches Haus,
Juch-heissa vivat pohlisches Haus,
Da steht ein altes Haus.

But Dr. Yoder also found a Holland Dutch version which resembles one he found in the Mahantango Valley. It contains the nonsensical refrain "tsjinge-linge-la," obviously closely akin to the "Dinge-dinge-daa" of the version we received from Mr. Oberholtzer. The first stanza of this Holland Dutch song runs:

In Holland staat een Huis,
In Holland staat een Huis,
In Holland staat een Huis,
Van je tsji, van je tsja,
Van je tsjinge-linge-la,
In Holland staat een Huis,
In Holland staat een Huis.

An English version of this Holland Dutch song is contained in a much-loved children's book "Old Dutch Nursery Rhymes (printed in England), David McKay, Philadelphia, 1917, of which the first stanza reads:

In Holland stands a house,
In Hollands stands a house—
Heigh-o, jig jig-ge-ty, ting-a-ling,
Join hands together and form a ring,
In Holland stands a house,
In Holland stands a house.

The first lines of the succeeding stanzas run as follows:

2. And in it lives a man,
3. The man he has a wife,
4. The wife she has a child,
5. The child it has a maid,
6. The maid she has a boy,
7. The boy he has a dog,
8. The maid she has a cat,
9. Now the dog turns out the cat,
10. And the boy turns out the dog,
11. And the maid sends off the boy,
12. And the wife sends off the maid,
13. And the wife now leaves the house,
14. And the man must leave it too,
15. And the house now catches fire,
16. And the child is left alone.

We were about to conclude our remarks about this folksong when that enthusiastic minstrel of our dialect songs, Paul R. Wieand, sent us the following interesting version:

In Poland schteht en Haus,
In Poland schteht en Haus,
In Poland schteht en polisches Haus,
Joe Keiser, pie-paa polisches Haus,
In Poland schteht en Hous.

The first lines of succeeding stanzas are:

2. **Wer wohnt dann in dem Haus?**
3. **En Waert wohnt in dem Haus.**
4. **Wer wohnt dann bei dem Waert?**
5. **En Maad wohnt bei dem Waert.**
6. **Was dutt er mit der Maad?**
7. **Er macht der Maad en Kind.**
8. **Was dutt sie mit dem Kind?**
9. **Sie schickt es in die Schul.**
10. **Was laernt es in der Schul?**

The last stanza varies slightly:

11. **Es laernt des A-B-C,**
Es laernt des A-B-C,
Es laernt des polische A-B-C,
Joe Keiser, polisches A-B-C,
Es laernt des A-B-C.

The song ends with the repetition of the first stanza.

In what country and among what people did this folksong originate? Perhaps we shall never know, but the above somewhat rambling narrative suffices to show how deeply ingrained in the hearts of the common people is the love of songs and ditties; how contagious their tune and meter really are; how persistently, despite local changes and additions, they continue down the generations; and how triumphantly they defy the boundaries of nations and races. They and their many companions are the unheralded embassadors of good will among the peoples of the earth. Was it not the eminent English historian Thomas Babington Macaulay who said he would rather have been the maker of the songs of a people than their laws?—P,A,B.

WANN'S SCHPETZEL SINGT

En Schpetzel hot sei Nescht gemacht
Im Baemche var meim Haus.
Es singt vun Frieh bis in die Nacht,
Wann's geht do nei un raus.
Kennt's sei, dass es so singe daet,
Weil ich net haerrlich bin?
Wann ich es heer, macht's mir viel Freed—
Du kummscht mir in der Sinn.

Net schei, so gutt des Schpetzel singe
Graad uff meim Bortsche Riggel.
Sei Kopp so hie un haere schwinge,
Vermuckt net mol en Fliggel.
Was so en Gsang em riehre Kann!
Des hot mich iwwernumme,
Ich hoff ich bleib alsnoch en Mann,
Wann Draene aa sin kumme.

Des bringt die Zeit zu mir zerick,
Wie'n Schpetzel gsunge hot
Im Judas Baam so an der Grick,
As wann's net schtoppe wott.
Un wann's ee Liedel leedich waar,
Kummt ihm en anners ei.
So iwwer's Wasser schallt des glaar,
Es kennt net schenner sei.

Iss dir der Gsang vum Schpetzel lieb,
So wie er frieher waar?
Macht des dir aa die Aage drieb,
En Zwang am Haerz sogaar?
Vergangenheit zu lewe drin,
Was des mir Freede bringt!
Un allfert kummscht mir in der Sinn,
Wann's Schpetzel zu mir singt.

An unpublished poem by the late LLOYD A. MOLL.

OLD TAVERNS

In the German almanac Neuer Hauswirthschafts-Calendar fuer das Jahr 1812, published by Friedrich Sanno in Carlisle, Pa. we have found some quaint names for early Pennsylvania taverns. There were no gas stations and auto clubs which issued convenient road maps, but under the title "Landstrassen gegen Westen" the traveller of those early days, whether in coach or saddle, could inform himself about the villages and inns and distances from the one to the other on his journey from Philadelphia westward to Pittsburgh. We read:

"Von Philadelphia zur Schuylkill 2, zum Schwarzen Pferd 4, zum Prinz von Wallis 4, Zum Hirsch 1, zum Pflug 1, zum Einhorn 3, zur blauen Kugel 4, zum Admiral Warren 3, zum Weissen Pferd 3, zu Downings 7, zum Schiffe 2, zum Wagen 6, zu Millers 6, zu Douglasses 3, zum Hut 4, zum Herzog von Cumberland 3, zum rothen Loewen 3, zur Conestoga 4, zum Lancaster Courthouse 2, zu Scotts 9, zu Bayleys 5, zu Hughs 4, zu Sampels 4, zur Schwatara 3, zu Taylors 3, zu Haerris's Ferry 8 (now Harrisburg), zu 's Hendricks 3, zu Calmers 11, zu Carlisle 3, zu Schippensburg 21, zu B. Chambers 11, zu Fort Louton 13, zu Fort Littleton 18, zur Juniata 19, zu Bedford 14, zum Anfang des Alleghaeny 15, zum steinigten Bach 15, zur Ost-Seite von Laurel Hill 12, zu Fort Liginer 9, zu Pittsburg 54, zusammen 320 Meilen."